

CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

LAURENCE E. REID  
*President Pro Tempore of the City Council*  
*Councilmember District #7*

(510) 238-7007  
FAX (510) 238-6910

March 29, 2006

Mr. Donald Neuwirth  
Executive Director  
Urban Ecology  
582 Market Street, Suite 1020  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

I am writing to offer my strong support for an East Bay Greenway under the BART elevated tracks from East Oakland to Fremont. The seismic retrofit of the BART elevated tracks presents the perfect opportunity to transform this underutilized, yet ripe corridor into a multi-use greenway that not only serves the needs of my constituents, but also addresses larger regional issues associated with open space, physical activity, and transportation access.

As Councilmember for District 7 in Oakland, I represent one of the more diverse communities in the Bay Area. (STATS) Like many similar communities, my district faces significant challenges in regards to providing adequate open space for families and children, strong infrastructure that promotes physical activity, and safe streets that facilitate non-motorized mobility. Unfortunately, these issues have manifested themselves into real-life health problems, as regional rates for obesity, asthma, and diabetes continue to rise. (STATS) We also continue to see high numbers of collisions throughout the region – further evidence that for those without access to a car it is a perilous environment to walk or bike.

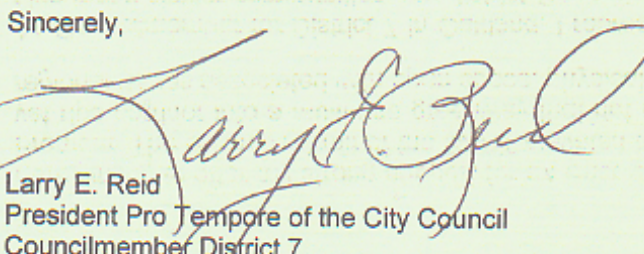
The development of a multi-use trail that offers paths for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as open space amenities like parks or playgrounds, would be the perfect complement to ongoing jurisdictional and regional efforts to address these key public health problems. With this Greenway, mobility options will increase, kids will be able to get to school safely, and families will have a new place to exercise.

An East Bay Greenway is also a crucial component to ensuring that BART's seismic retrofit project ultimately benefits the communities through which the tracks cut. The construction phase of the seismic project will have significant noise, traffic, and visual impacts on the residents of Oakland. To mitigate those impacts, it is essential that BART does not simply return the corridor to its current, underutilized condition. Residents from Oakland to Fremont deserve more than the status quo, and now is the perfect time for BART to begin preparing for that future.

The East Bay Greenway is an attainable vision. I support and encourage Urban Ecology to work with BART, other relevant municipalities, and community groups to push the vision into a tangible reality.

If you have any questions or require anything additional from us, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Larry E. Reid  
President Pro Tempore of the City Council  
Councilmember District 7




**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT**

300 Lakeside Drive, P.O. Box 12688  
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April 13, 2006

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Urban Ecology  
582 Market Street, Suite 1020  
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Tom Radulovich  
9TH DISTRICT

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District is pleased to support Urban Ecology's conceptual planning for an East Bay Greenway. The proposed multi-use path would be in a corridor from Oakland to Fremont, and could possibly be located under the BART elevated tracks. It is vital to increase not only access to BART stations along this corridor, but also to provide infrastructure that benefits the community that BART serves. Given the success of the Ohlone Greenway, the time has come for an in-depth evaluation of the East Bay Greenway's potential to provide a safe, healthy and accessible route for pedestrians and bicyclists.

With the steady growth in population and the limited road capacity in the Bay Area, it is increasingly evident that transit systems like BART will play a crucial role in the Bay Area's overall quality of life. The effectiveness of BART, however, is largely dependent on how easily people can access the stations, and BART expects to become increasingly reliant on bicycling and walking access. The Ohlone Greenway in Berkeley, Albany, and El Cerrito provides residents and visitors with the ability to walk or bike to BART in a safe and healthy manner. Urban Ecology's vision sets the stage for a similar corridor along the East Oakland to Fremont section.

If the BART alignment is selected as the optimal location for the path, the construction of the path could potentially be coordinated with the BART Earthquake Safety Program, which will be seismically upgrading BART's facilities in this corridor. While the Earthquake Safety Program cannot fund the multi-use path, there may be opportunities to achieve economies of scale by integrating the vital improvements to rider safety with ground level community improvements.

Urban Ecology's conceptual plan should strive to integrate the input and concerns of BART, relevant jurisdictions, and community groups to comprehensively and technically address system security, operations and maintenance, right-of-way acquisition, user safety, and, of course, funding options for the capital costs of the project. A plan that effectively tackles these issues will garner the support of BART and be a crucial step in turning the vision for an East Bay Greenway into reality. On behalf of BART and its staff, I look forward to working with you in the near future regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Carole Ward Allen  
President  
BART Board of Directors





April 1, 2006

Mr. Donald Neuwirth  
Executive Director  
Urban Ecology  
582 Market Street, Suite 1020  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

The East Bay Asian Youth Center strongly supports Urban Ecology's efforts to develop a conceptual plan for a multi-use trail that incorporates diverse transportation options, adequate open space, and safe facilities under the elevated tracks of the BART corridor from East Oakland to Fremont. It is time that we evaluate this underutilized corridor and its potential for regional solutions to community problems.

Based in Oakland's San Antonio neighborhood district, the East Bay Asian Youth Center has a multi-racial and multi-ethnic membership of over 700 families. Like many neighborhoods in the Bay Area, we face significant challenges in regards to adequate open space for families and children, inability to access daily services without a car, and safe streets that enable children to get to and from school. While our organization does not directly tackle all of these issues, we are seeing more and more how they impact the daily lives of the people we represent.

Urban Ecology has presented us with a possible vision for the BART corridor from East Oakland to Fremont, and we feel that a multi-use greenway represents a feasible alternative that many community members could rally behind. The Greenway would transform a currently underutilized and unattractive space into a community asset that would benefit current inhabitants in addition to the inevitable influx of new residents to the area. In addition, the Greenway would significantly add to the current dearth of open space that is available to families and children. East Oakland neighborhoods like the Lower San Antonio currently have less than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the city's standard for open space – a number that is not acceptable, yet could be improved with the addition of a greenway.

An East Bay Greenway is also a crucial component to ensuring that BART's upcoming seismic retrofit project ultimately benefits the communities through which the tracks cut. The construction phase of the seismic project will have significant noise, traffic, and visual impacts on our community. To mitigate those impacts, it is essential that BART does not simply return the corridor to its current, underutilized condition. Residents from Oakland to Fremont deserve more than the status quo, and now is the perfect time for BART to begin preparing for that future.

We look forward to further partnerships and collaboration as Urban Ecology moves forward with the conceptual study and plan for project

Sincerely,

David Kakishiba  
Executive Director

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April 13, 2006

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Mr. Donald Neuwirth  
Executive Director  
Urban Ecology  
582 Market Street, Suite 1020  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

It is my pleasure to offer strong support for Urban Ecology's efforts to develop a conceptual plan for a multi-use trail that incorporates diverse transportation options, adequate open space, and safe facilities under the elevated tracks of the BART corridor from East Oakland to Fremont. It is time that we evaluate this underutilized corridor and its potential for regional solutions to community problems. This Greenway will enhance our new affordable housing development at the Coliseum BART station.

My organization, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation has produced over 800 units of housing, commercial space and nonprofit office space. We are also engaged in family asset development and neighborhood revitalization. Like many neighborhoods in the Bay Area we face significant challenges in regards to adequate open space for families and children, inability to access daily services without a car, and safe streets that enable children to get to and from school. While our organization does not directly tackle all of these issues, we are seeing more and more how they impact the daily lives of the people we represent. The lower San Antonio Neighborhood has many overcrowded households and only three public parks.

Urban Ecology has presented us with a possible vision for the BART corridor from East Oakland to Fremont, and we feel that a multi-use greenway represents a feasible alternative that many community members could rally behind. The Greenway would transform a currently underutilized and unattractive space into a community asset that would benefit current inhabitants in addition to the inevitable influx of new residents to the area. In addition, the Greenway would significantly add to the current dearth of open space that is available to families and children. East Oakland neighborhoods like the Lower San Antonio currently have less than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the city's standard for open space – a number that is not acceptable, yet could be improved with the addition of a greenway.

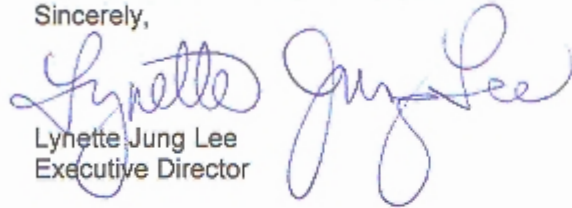
An East Bay Greenway is also a crucial component to ensuring that BART's upcoming seismic retrofit project ultimately benefits the communities through which the tracks cut. The construction phase of the seismic project will have significant noise, traffic, and visual impacts on our community. To mitigate those impacts, it is essential that BART does not simply return the corridor to its current, underutilized condition. Residents from Oakland to Fremont deserve more than the status quo, and now is the perfect time for BART to begin preparing for that future.

We look forward to further partnerships and collaboration as Urban Ecology moves forward with the conceptual study and plan for project. In the meantime, we encourage

Urban Ecology to continue to call on the community members of the region, so that we can ensure that the final product truly meets the needs of the people that it will impact the most.

Do not hesitate do contact me if I can be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lynette Jung Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lynette" and last name "Lee" being more prominent than the middle name "Jung".

Lynette Jung Lee  
Executive Director





California  
Field Office

April 14, 2006

Mr. Donald Neuwirth  
Executive Director  
Urban Ecology  
582 Market Street, Suite 1020  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

On behalf of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, I would like to convey our enthusiastic support for Urban Ecology and its efforts to develop a conceptual plan for a pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the BART corridor from East Oakland to Fremont. This project will benefit the region in so many ways: expanding access to our existing transit systems, providing an alternative, non-motorized network, increasing green space, and improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Rails-to-Trails conservancy has been involved in creating trails and greenways for 20 years, and we have witnessed the community transformation that can occur with a project like the East Bay Greenway. The development of this 30-mile network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities would go a long way to helping the region develop a *cohesive and complete* transportation system – one that not only facilitates automobile travel, but also enables non-motorized mobility for those residents that do not have a car and rely instead on public transit for daily travel residents. By transforming this underutilized corridor, access to BART stations and several major AC Transit lines would undoubtedly improve.

We have many successful examples of rail-trails to point to right here in the Bay Area. The Ohlone Greenway is a prime example. For twenty plus years, the Ohlone Greenway, which follows the route of a former rail corridor, has provided a crucial link between job centers, housing, and schools, in addition to a multitude of recreational opportunities for young and old alike. A potential eyesore has been transformed into an indispensable regional asset. Now we have an opportunity to explore creating a similar rail-trail connecting Oakland to Fremont, and we support that effort should not reap the same benefits.

We support Urban Ecology's efforts to advance this project and look forward to collaborating on its development and implementation.

Sincerely,

Laura R. Cohen  
Director, Western Region

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